



**WILD & SCENIC RIVERS
ELIGIBILITY REPORT & SUITABILITY STUDY
UPDATE & PROCESS**

Grand Junction Field Office

Overview of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act



The study of and designation of watercourses under the WSR Act follows a multi step process :

eligibility → suitability → congressional action





Eligibility

Eligibility



Inventory for eligibility was conducted by GJFO's **Interdisciplinary Team** with input from cooperating agencies.

The eligibility inventory includes the assessment of **free-flowing condition** and **outstandingly remarkable values** (ORVs).

Free-flowing



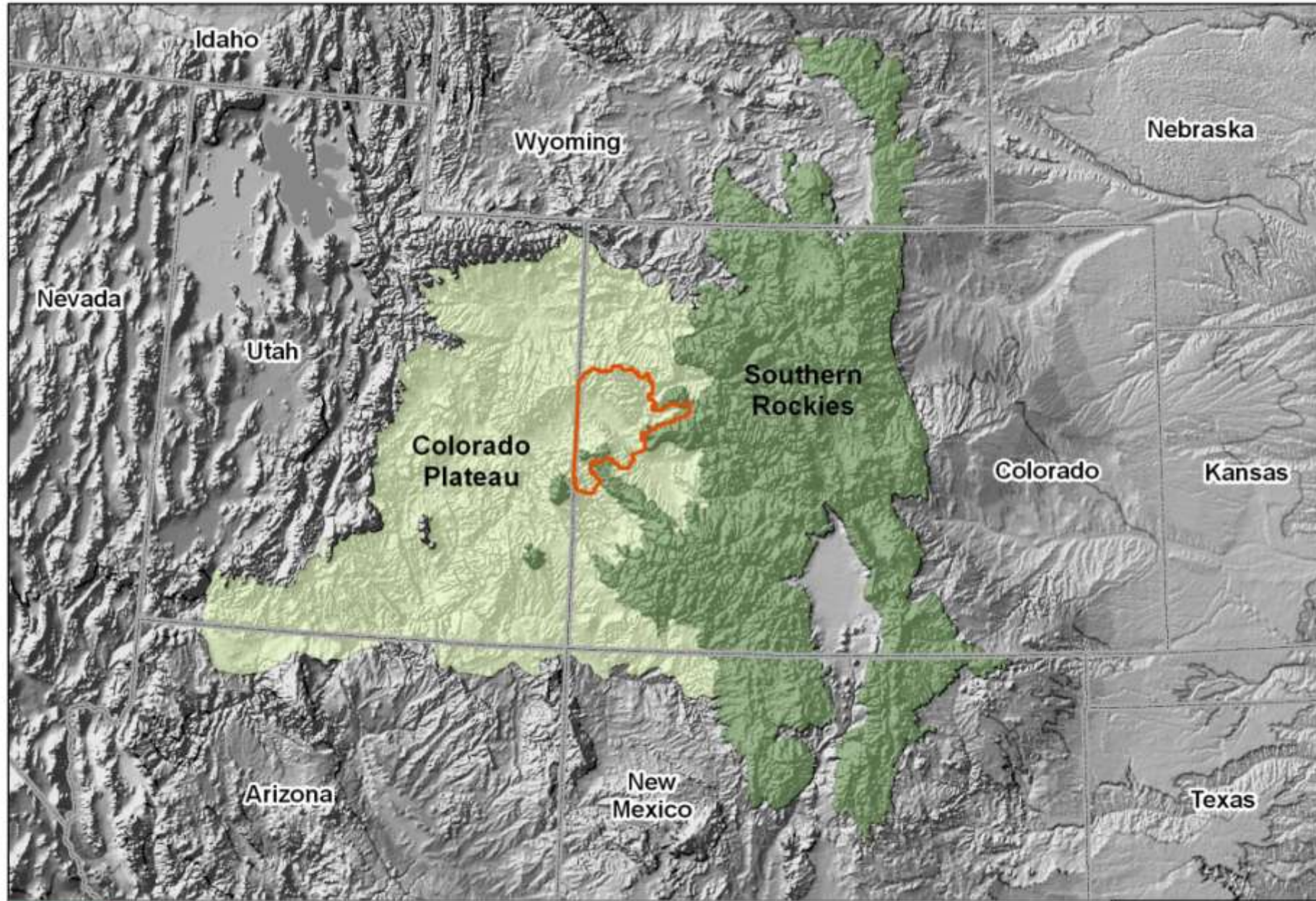
- Defined as
 - existing or flowing in a natural condition without:
 - ✦ impoundment,
 - ✦ diversion,
 - ✦ straightening,
 - ✦ rip-rapping, or
 - ✦ other major modification of the waterway
 - and can:
 - ✦ Be any size/length
 - ✦ Lie between impoundments or major dams
 - ✦ Be nonfloatable/nonboatable
 - ✦ Be intermittent/nonperennial



Outstandingly Remarkable Values



- Rare, uncommon, extraordinary
- A superior example of a widespread value
- Outstanding in a statewide, regional, or national context
- Stream-related
- Based on the expertise of professionals who are knowledgeable about that value
- Examples of ORVs - scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar value.



Colorado Plateau



US State Boundaries



Southern Rockies



GJFO Boundary

Miles
0 25 50 100

Map produced by the
Grand Junction Field Office, Bureau of
Land Management, Grand Junction, CO.
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management
as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of
these data. Original data were compiled from various
sources. This information may not meet National Map
Accuracy Standards. This project was developed through
digital means and may be updated without notice.



Potential Classifications for Eligible Segments



River and stream segments determined to be free-flowing and possessing at least one ORV are deemed eligible segments and are assigned a tentative classification (wild, scenic, recreational) based on the level of human development in the river corridor.

Classification

Wild : Free of impoundments, generally inaccessible except by trail (no roads), with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive, and having unpolluted waters.

Scenic : Free of impoundments, having shorelines or watersheds largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational : Readily accessible by road or railroad, may have some development along the shoreline, and may have had some impoundment or diversion in the past.



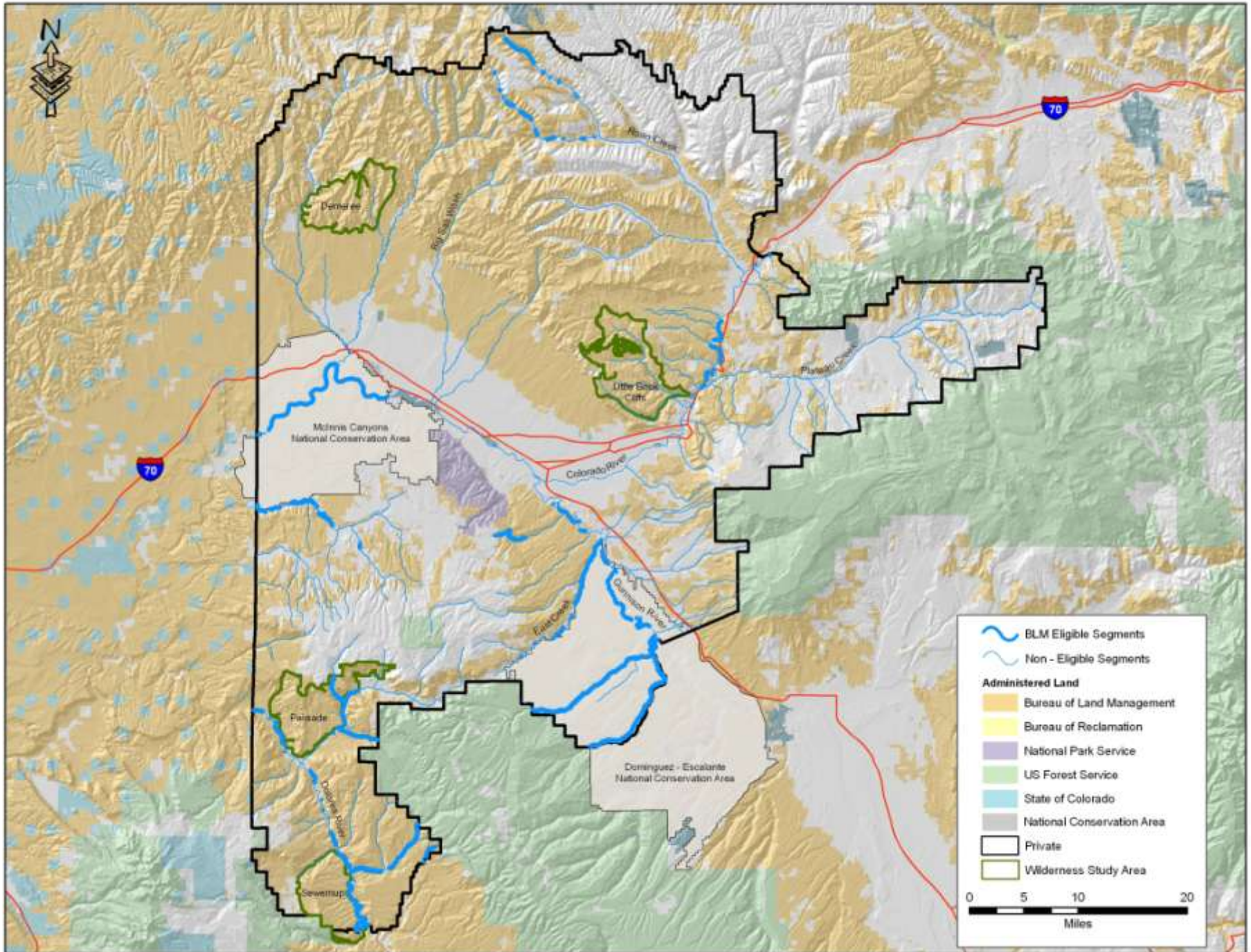
GJFO Eligible Segments



In the inventory phase 117 segments were identified for review. After the eligibility study was complete, 15 watercourses, separated into 20 segments, were identified as eligible. Eligible segments of the GJFO include segments from the following areas:

- Colorado River (3 Segments)
- Dolores River
 - Dolores River
 - North Fork Mesa
 - Blue Creek
- Dominguez Canyons and Little Dominguez (4 Segments)
- Gunnison River (2 Segments)
- Little Dolores River
- Roan Creek and Carr Creek
- Rough Canyon
- Unaweep Canyon
 - East Creek
 - West creek
 - North Fork West Creek
 - Ute Creek







Suitability

Suitability Process



- Suitability is a process of determining the actual manageability of a river segment, based on multiple factors:
 - Land and mineral estate ownership
 - Use tradeoffs and conflicts
 - Compatibility with local/state interests, plans, programs
 - Availability of other methods for protecting values
 - Valid and prior existing rights, such as water rights
 - Water quality, streamside development
 - Contribution to river system integrity

Suitability Process



Public and Outside Entity Involvement

Suitability analysis is conducted by the BLM using input from our partners, stakeholder group and cooperators who help identify management conflicts, issues, and other alternatives for protecting values.

Suitability Process



Product

Development of alternatives identifying suitable segments (ranging from all to none of the eligible segments) and selection of the preferred alternative in the Record of Decision.

Congressional Designation



Process

The BLM State Director prepares and forwards a study report to the BLM Director. This report is routed through the Secretary of the Interior for congressional consideration. (BLM has the latitude to actively recommend or decline to actively recommend designation to Congress/President.)

Public and Outside Entity Involvement

Normal avenues of public participation in legislation.

Product

Study report of suitable segments and congressional decision on designation.

Effects of WSR Designation



Section 10(a) of the Act states:

Each component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included without . . . limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features. Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area.

Water Rights



- Congressional designation has historically included a federal reserved water right.
- Agency determination of suitability does not include a water right.

Water Rights



- If Congressional designation occurs, the managing agency quantifies the amount and timing of water necessary to support ORVs
- Water right adjudicated in state court
- The federal water right receives a priority equal to the date of designation.

Resources



<http://www.rivers.gov/>

Management, Publications, FAQs & Technical Reports

<http://www.blm.gov/>

What we Do (Left)

National Landscape Conservation System (Left)

Wild and Scenic Rivers (Right)

<http://www.blm.gov/>

Colorado

Grand Junction

GJFO Resource Management Plan

Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report